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**WESTCHESTER MAN INDICTED FOR 1999 COLD CASE MURDER
OF 13-YEAR-OLD BRONX GIRL
Cold Case Solved After Familial DNA Hit;
First Time Technology is Used to Solve a Crime in New York City**

Bronx District Attorney Darcel D. Clark and New York City Police Commissioner Dermot Shea today announced that a Westchester man has been indicted on Murder charges in the 1999 killing of a Bronx teen after investigators used familial DNA, the first time the technology is used in New York City to solve a case.

District Attorney Clark said, "The defendant allegedly killed 13-year-old Minerliz Soriano and then took her bound body in a garbage bag and left it in a dumpster in Co-op City near where a mall now stands. This beautiful little girl was treated as less than human. It has been 22 years since her life was cruelly taken, but detectives never gave up on finding justice for her and her family, and neither did my ADAs.

"The DNA science and technology advanced over the years, and familial DNA was instrumental in linking the defendant, Joseph Martinez, AKA Jupiter Joe, to the murder. But while the technology was vital, it really was the humanity, dedication and compassion of the investigators and their relentless drive to get justice in this case. That is why we do this work. I hope today's indictment brings some consolation to the victim's family."

NYPD Commissioner Shea said, "Today's indictment reflects the commitment of NYPD detectives to be the voice of victims who can no longer speak for themselves. In this case they used the science of familial DNA searching, combined with dogged investigative work, to achieve a measure of closure for all who knew and loved 13-year-old Minerliz Soriano. Detectives, both active and retired, along with our forensic experts and partners in the Bronx District Attorney's office never gave up in their work to ensure justice for this innocent child."

District Attorney Clark said the defendant, Joseph Martinez, AKA Jupiter Joe, 49, of Memorial Highway, New Rochelle, N.Y., was arraigned today on two counts of second-degree Murder, Felony and Intentional, before Bronx Supreme Court Justice Efrain Alvarado. The defendant was remanded and is due back in court on March 7, 2022.



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According to the investigation, on February 24, 1999, the victim walked home from school. The victim's body was found wrapped in a trash bag in a dumpster behind a video store in Co-op City on February 28, 1999. The victim had been sexually abused, and her neck was compressed, causing her death.

Martinez was arrested on November 29, 2021 after the NYPD and the Bronx District Attorney's Office in April 2019 submitted a joint application to the state to perform a familial DNA search. A DNA sample, which was obtained from a semen stain on the victim's sweatshirt, was submitted to the New York State convicted offender DNA database for potential relatives that could match the specimen. That search and further investigation led to the defendant. Investigators then obtained a DNA sample from the defendant, and it matched the DNA found on the victim's sweatshirt. This is the first case in New York City that has utilized familial DNA.

The case is being prosecuted by Assistant District Attorney John Miras, Counsel in the Homicide Bureau, under the supervision of Christine Scaccia, Chief of the Homicide Bureau, and under the overall supervision of James Brennan, Deputy Chief of the Trial Division, and Theresa Gottlieb, Chief of the Trial Division. District Attorney Clark thanked Assistant District Attorney David Slott, Chief of the Forensic Sciences Unit, and Lindsey Cooper, Forensic Analyst, for their assistance in the investigation.

District Attorney Clark thanked Detective Dominic Robinson, Detective James Menton, Detective Patrick Sullivan, retired Detective Malcom Reiman, Sergeant Thomas O. McLaughlin and Lieutenant William S. O'Toole, all of the NYPD Bronx Homicide Task Force, as well as retired NYPD Detective Bernard Ryan of the 45th Precinct, who was the original case investigator. District Attorney Clark also thanked Detective Joseph Bello, Detective Joseph Rodriguez, Detective Martin Guilfoyle and Criminalist Supervisor Melissa Huyck, all of the NYPD Forensic Investigation Division for their assistance in the investigation, and retired Detective Michael Lagiovane of Bronx Homicide.

An indictment is an accusatory instrument and not proof of a defendant's guilt.

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